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DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Provincial Agricultural Association,



AT ITS

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION

AT HAMILTON, 1880,

QUEBEC

BY THE PRESIDENT,

J. C. RYKERT, ESQ., M. P.,

OF ST. CATHARINES.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE COUNCIL.

TORONTO:

GLOBE PRINTING COMPANY, 26 AND 28 KING STREET EAST.

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HAMILTON, SEPT. 29.

The 35th Annual Meeting of the Agriculture and Arts Association of the Province of Ontario was held this evening in the Court House in this city—the President, J. C. Rykert, M. P., in the chair.

Amongst those present were:—

Members of the Council.—District No. 1, D. P. McKinnon, South Finch; District No. 2, Ira Morgan, Osgoode; District No. 3, Joshua Legge, Jr., Gananoque; District No. 4, J. B. Aylesworth, Newburgh; District No. 5, John Carnegie, Peterboro'; District No. 6, Geo. Graham, Brampton; District No. 7, G. Moore, Waterloo; District No. 9, Hon. D. Christie, Paris; District No. 10, William Roy, Owen Sound; District No. 11, L. E. Shipley, Grey-stead; District No. 12, Stephen White, Charing Cross; District No. 13, Charles Drury, Crown Hill.

Ex-officio Members.—Hon. S. C. Wood, Commissioner of Agriculture, &c., Toronto; James Young, M.P.P., Galt, President of the Mechanics' Institutes' Association of Ontario; Otto Klotz, Preston, Vice-President of the Mechanics' Institutes' Association of Ontario; David McCrae, Elected Member of the Mechanics' Institutes' Association of Ontario; C. Dempsey, President of the Fruit Growers' Association; William Saunders, President of the Entomological Society, London; K. Graham, Belleville, President of the Dairymen's Association of Eastern Ontario; E. Caswell, Ingersoll, President of the Dairymen's Association of Western Ontario; James Mills, Principal of Ontario School of Agriculture, Guelph; William Brown, Professor Ontario School of Agriculture, Guelph.

Ex-Presidents.—Messrs. F. W. Stone, Thomas Stock, S. Wilmot.

Delegates from Agricultural Societies.—W. G. Hingston, East Huron; James Tolton, South Bruce; John McClurg, Joseph Rosser, North Middlesex; John McPherson, West Middlesex; Wm. Eadie, William Guy, Russell; Wm. Carruthers, John Pratt, West Northumberland; Alex. Servos, Robert Shearer, Niagara; John Crawford, Alfred Mason, East York; Wm. Young, Humphrey Snell, West Huron; W. H. Pardo, John Paxton, West Kent; David Johnson, Donald Douglas, East Northumberland; James Sutherland, W. McLeod, Stormont; Thomas Hamilton, Dundas; John Lee, East Kent;

Jas. Jackson, Luther Cheyne, Peel; Jos. B. Pearce, Chas. O'Reilly, East Peterboro'; Samuel Wood, Alex. K. McDonnell, Cornwall; E. Jackson, North York; Joseph Salkeld, North Perth; Oliver D. Cowan, W. A. Webster, South Leeds; J. B. Bessey, Henry Robinson, Halton; Jacob Gainer, J. K. Crawford, Welland; Peter Reanie, David Foott, Centre Wellington; Peter Bristol, John Sharp, Lennox; James Thorndike, South Victoria; R. S. Patterson, West Hastings; Andrew Smith, V.S., W. H. Doel, Toronto; James Millar, South Grenville; James Russell, Robert Auld, East Lambton; E. C. Carpenter, J. T. Murphy, North Norfolk; Peter McEwen, North Leeds and Grenville; John McKellar, John Crawford, Ottawa; A. R. McGregor, Wm. Mowbray, West Lambton; Wm. Donaldson, North Oxford; John Cowan, Prince Edward; Richard Whetter, George Douglass, East Middlesex; Daniel Burt, C. Oneall, North Brant; Joseph Dunkin, South Norfolk; Angus McBean, Walter Idington, South Waterloo; William Tripp, South Oxford; George Murton, M. Sweetnam, South Wellington; Hugh Crawford, John Jackson, Monck; Robert Deverell, John D. Howden, South Ontario; Edward Jeffs, John Ross, South Simcoe; Anson Aylesworth, R. Nugent, Addington; Hugh Love, South Huron; J. S. Caesar, V.S., Col. A. T. H. Williams, East Durham; Joseph Cline, W. M. Calder, South Wentworth; James Campbell, Joseph Walter, West Peterboro'; Roger Headley, South Perth; T. Attridge, James Black, North Wentworth.

Delegates from Horticultural Societies.—D. W. Beadle, Lincoln; John Thompson, North Grey; James Vine, William McLaren, East Hastings; F. W. Wood, Sarnia; Peter Barnham, Preston; J. B. Hay, Brantford; Alex. McD. Allan, Goderich; Charles Scott; Robert Anderson, Orangeville; T. Partridge, John Plummer, London; Dr. Henderson, Strathroy; D. R. Dobier, Owen Sound; A. Munro, Glengarry; Geo. Leslie, Jr., Toronto; J. M. Lott-ridge, A. E. Carpenter, Hamilton.

Mechanics' Institutes.—Alex. Williams, Woodbridge; A. K. Scholfield, Port Colborne; Thomas Tilt, Waterloo; Henry Wade, Port Hope; John Smith, Claude; David Stock, Dr. McGregor, Waterdown; H. W. Peterson, Waterloo; John G. Watson, Ayr.

Judge Sinclair, Mr. Thomas Robertson, Q. C., M. P., Mr. Geo. Roach and others, were likewise present. Mr. J. R. Craig acted as Secretary.

After the calling of the roll of members, 300 of whom answered to their names, the President read the following address:—

GENTLEMEN,—After the lapse of fifteen years, it is again my privilege, as the head of the Agriculture and Arts Association of Ontario, to address you on those subjects which are more intimately connected with Agriculture. It is with the greatest satisfaction, but at the same time with amazement, that I have witnessed during that period the wonderful and rapid strides which have been made in the development of the agricultural and manufacturing resources of the country. Everywhere is to be seen unlimited evidence of the industry of our agriculturists and the inventive genius of our mechanics.

To those, like myself, who have been connected with this Association for over a quarter of a century, and who have seen the agricultural interests in their infancy, and who have watched the wonderful effect which the generous rivalry created by these agricultural societies has had in popularizing the pursuit of agriculture, it is indeed a source of gratification, and has more than rewarded us for the time devoted to this work. The great extent of the Exhibition, and its yearly increase, having rendered it impossible to satisfy the general public in the limited time which had heretofore been allotted to it, a resolution was passed at the last Annual Meeting in favor of holding the same for two weeks. I think, however, it would be advisable to open the Exhibition in the future on Wednesday and close the same on Thursday of the following week. This would enable the exhibitors to attend and return without interfering with the Sabbath. In every department there has been a largely increased number of exhibitors, and the general excellence of the articles exhibited affords the strongest evidence of the increased interest taken in the Exhibition by those whose duty it is to develop the agricultural and mechanical interests of the country.

From a financial point of view the present Exhibition has not been so successful as was anticipated, mainly, if not altogether, on account of the illiberality and want of public spirit on the part of the managers of the several railways. The conduct of the manager of the Great Western Railway, whose action, I am informed, decided that of other companies, has appeared in marked contrast with that of his predecessors, who invariably aided to their utmost in accommodating the general public. It seems impossible to understand the apparent indifference of that official to the interests of the Canadian people. His uncourteous conduct towards the large and influential delegation which waited on him with a view to having the fares reduced was not calculated to popularize his railway. He may yet be taught to know that even railway managers are amenable to public opinion. Civility has always been a cheap and useful commodity in this country, and the possession of a moderate amount of it might be found beneficial, even to so important a person as a railway manager.

In the department of mechanical implements there has been a very large increase, exhibiting many improvements upon valuable implements and machines already in use; also a very large number of new and useful machines, showing that the enterprise of our mechanics is keeping pace with the increasing necessity for labor-saving machinery. And I think the Association has great cause to feel gratified that year after year has shown a steady and large increase in this most important department.

The magnificent exhibition of agricultural and horticultural productions bears testimony to the abundant harvest with which we have again been blessed, and the excellence of the several articles exhibited leaves no room to doubt that increased interest is being taken in developing the agricultural resources of the country.

It is with pleasure I have also to notice the wonderful display in the dairy department, which is fast becoming one of the most important industries in Ontario. To those gentlemen who have devoted so much time and thought in developing this new branch of industry we are under the greatest obligations. No one class of our people has done more to bring this country into notice throughout Britain and the Continent than those connected with dairy interests.

It can hardly be expected that I shall be able, in the limited time which must necessarily be occupied with the annual address, to do more than discuss briefly some few of the various subjects which may be of interest to those connected with this Association, and to offer such practical suggestions as may be of benefit to those engaged in the noble pursuit of agriculture.

The importance of these Agricultural Associations is daily becoming more evident, and I think I am safe in asserting that, so far as this Province is concerned, its ability to maintain itself in the foremost rank of agricultural communities is largely due to the influence of these societies brought to bear upon the people by their annual fairs, and by the opportunities they afford to the people of witnessing the improved systems of agriculture. These annual Exhibitions have been the means of popularizing the science of agriculture, and of convincing the rising generation that the practice of farming is one of the most ennobling of pursuits.

It is now a profession calling to its aid science and the mechanical arts, and in its every branch the inventive genius of man. The farmer now, instead of merely following the beaten track of his ancestor, brings to his pursuit his own power of inquiry and of investigation. Chemistry teaches him the nature and quality of the ingredients composing his soil, the species of crop suitable to its productive power, and the kinds of manure he must use, and the proportion of cattle he must keep to make his farm productive. As he acquires a knowledge of chemistry and agricultural geology, and of the physiology of plants and animals, his crops become more certain and his reward more sure. Armed with knowledge, the fertility of man's mind has discovered remedies for the sterility of soils, and found means for guarding the fruits of his labor even against the vicissitudes of climate. I know there has been a disposition in the minds of a large portion of the community to undervalue the farming interest, and the idea has to some extent pervaded the minds of farmers themselves, that this occupation is not so respectable or so honorable as some other calling. I am happy to believe that the true position of the agriculturist, among the other callings and pursuits of our citizens, is becoming better understood and appreciated in the community than it has hitherto been. Farmers themselves are beginning to awake to a sense of the position they occupy in society and to the dignity of their calling. It is now generally acknowledged that the prosperity of agriculture is indispensable to general prosperity. It is the great moving power of human existence. There has, unfortunately, been a disposition among farmers them-

selves to undervalue the many advantages which they enjoy, and to consider the labor of conducting the operation of the farm as a kind of drudgery. But if that be drudgery, what shall we call the daily labor of the mechanic, or the dull routine of the merchant, or what the confinement of the law office or the counting-room? The farmer, while cultivating the soil, breathes the pure air of heaven in the school-room of nature, and, if an apt scholar, he will study her ways, profit by her example, and be led to the consideration of the beauties which she is continually presenting before him. The true farmer finds not only employment for his physical powers, but for his mental faculties, and by studying nature he practically becomes a natural philosopher.

I hold it to be the duty of every good citizen to teach the youth of our country that the art of agriculture has about all the elements which serve to make it an honorable profession. There is nothing in the legitimate pursuits of agriculture that is in any respect unintellectual or debasing, nor is there anything in it to prevent the upright and intelligent farmer from enjoying, and if need be expressing, the conscientious conviction that his life is as honorable as his neighbor's, be that neighbor who he may. Other pursuits may have more of the fancy, agriculture the realities. It may be said with entire truth, with reference to our own people, that the wider and the broader the field of agricultural labor is made, the more general and extensive the employment of our citizens in agricultural pursuits, just in that proportion will the substantial interests of the country be promoted. On the other hand, just in proportion as you desert your agricultural field, allow noxious weeds to take the place of rich meadows and growing crops, flock into your cities, engage in the exciting but unprofitable pursuits of speculation, in that same proportion will the country suffer the devastating consequences. There have been times, and they have occurred more than once in the recollection of many of us, when the intoxicating excitement of wild and visionary speculation—the hopes of speedy fortunes—the unnatural and greedy desire for gain, to be acquired without labor and spent with little judgment, have induced many to quit the peaceful and sober pursuit of agriculture—induced them to leave their fruitful farms and happy homes for scenes of unnatural excitement, where trade was feverish and the pulse of business dangerously high and rapid, where capital was fictitious and credit unbounded, where fortunes could be made in a day, and wealth become the plaything of an hour.

We can learn a lesson from the past that may teach us a surer and safer path for the future. Let not agricultural pursuits be either despised or neglected. Their advantages can scarcely be appreciated, and the more we reflect upon it, the more information and experience we obtain, the firmer will be our conviction that agriculture is not only one of the noblest, but also one of the most useful of the arts.

It must be borne in mind that success in agricultural pursuits depends largely upon the knowledge of the principles of agriculture and the laws of organic life. No business in which man can engage, not even the professions

of medicine, divinity, or law, is more dependent for success upon deep and extensive learning, yet none has derived so little benefit from the great discoveries of the age as the business of farming; and while no class of men so much need, from their isolated situation and few social advantages, the refining, liberalizing, and ennobling influences of education, none really obtain so little. No persons avail themselves so tardily and reluctantly of these agents of human progress which inventive genius and artistic skill has given to the world. To be enabled to gain the full benefits of the many experiments constantly being made to increase the productiveness of the soil by improved culture, and to carry them forward to profitable results, there is need for thorough agricultural education. In all methods of fertilizing and improving the soil; in rotation and selection of crops; in feeding the animal; in bringing farm produce into a condition fit for market, the aid of science is not only important, but indispensable to the most advantageous prosecution of agriculture. The subject of education, with particular reference to agricultural pursuits, is one of such great importance to the country, to the community, and to every individual citizen, that I feel there is no necessity for apologizing for dwelling so long upon the same.

It is a great misfortune that the feeling should so generally prevail among an agricultural community that the mere rudiments of education are sufficient for the boy who intends to be a farmer, who—often for the sake of his assistance on the farm—is deprived of availing himself to the fullest extent of the advantages which are afforded by our magnificent Common School system; whilst for the one who has selected one of the learned professions, he recognizes the necessity of a longer period of study, and all the advantages for the attainment of general information and mental training offered by the higher educational institutions. The farmer should recollect that until he obtains an amount of information adequate to the highest demands of this progressive age he will not possess the means of securing that pecuniary independence which is one of the necessary adjuncts of free-citizenship, and that he will also fail to reach that elevated social position wherein man's best and highest powers are developed and exercised, and the happiest results of a well-spent life worked out. To the farmer, I would say that the real dignity of his profession is determined, not by the fact that a few great men, here and there, have belonged to it: it springs from its relations to the interests of society, and from the character of the majority of those engaged in it. I contend that the farmer should enjoy all the highest advantages of mental culture for a training suitable to his business, for the acquisition of an intelligence that shall make his work more effective, while it enables him to stand up in society among the foremost for real mental power. The time, the age, the progress made in other departments of life, press the subject upon him, and when once his energies shall be earnestly enlisted there is nothing in this direction which his efforts may not accomplish.

This annual gathering of the farmers of this country in itself dignifies the

labor of which it is but the exponent. It is most gratifying to know that the influence of these agricultural associations has uniformly had this tendency, and that a great change in this particular is clearly discernible where these means have been successfully applied. The notion that agricultural pursuits were not suited to mental acquirements—that an educated farmer was likely to be an unsuccessful one, and that if a man knew how to hold his plough and reap his grain he had all the knowledge that a farmer need to have—is already exploded. These agricultural societies now scattered throughout the land have done much to correct this false view and to give in its place the conviction that farmers must be educated. When this principle shall have been fully settled, we shall have the dignity of farm labor truly vindicated.

While our Common School system, the equal of which cannot be found in any country, has done much for the youth of our country, it is to be regretted that the curriculum does not embrace those branches of education which are so essential to those who purpose pursuing the profession of farming. The study of natural sciences should be introduced into all our schools, and prosecuted by all pupils who have made sufficient preliminary attainments. They ought to learn enough of botany to understand the process of growth from germination to maturity of all cultivated plants, grains, and vegetables, with the use of every part, as accurately as the different portions of their own labor. They ought to study chemistry until they know the nature and properties of all the elementary substances which enter into the composition of plants and animals; and all the gases essential to their health and life, and just what food the wheat or the potato requires, so that they may feed them with precisely the diet each needs, as intelligently as they would administer to the wants of the horse or other animals. By such a course the mind would begin to be disciplined, would acquire habits of reflection and investigation, and the young farmer would afterwards enter upon his employment with some adequate conception of its dignity and importance. A proper and thorough system of agricultural education introduced into our Common Schools as well as the schools of a higher standard, particularly in the rural districts, would have a tendency to popularize the profession of agriculture, and remove that prejudice which is readily created in the minds of our youth against what they believe to be the laborious pursuit of agriculture, especially when brought in contact with those whose greatest ambition is to follow one of the learned professions or engage in mercantile pursuits, which possess so many fascinating influences.

There being a great preponderance of the agricultural class in the country, it necessarily follows that in all rural districts the schools are well filled with those who are to be engaged in the same business. There is a large field for agricultural science, which may be cultivated to advantage in the Common Schools. At present there are but few who are qualified in these schools to impart instruction in the science of agriculture, although the attention of those who have the charge of our educational institutions has been repeatedly

drawn to this great defect in our school system. It but remains for the farming community to bring their united influence to bear upon those whose duty it is to see that that system keeps pace with the times, and the defect will, I am sure, be speedily remedied.

The Legislature of Ontario has already recognized the importance of an agricultural education by the establishment of a college which, I am pleased to admit, as one of those who originally supported the scheme and voted in favor of the experiment, has already done much to disseminate agricultural knowledge. It cannot, however, be expected that this institution, limited in its extent and its resources, can fully accomplish the aims of its original promoters, unless its usefulness can be enlarged and extended by the affiliation of other schools in different sections of the Province, in which the elements of agricultural knowledge must be taught, and which will act as a feeder to the school at Guelph. A very large number of pupils from different parts of this Province, as well as a very considerable number from the other Provinces, have already taken advantage of the opportunity afforded them for the acquisition of agricultural knowledge at this institution; and from the report that has been placed in my hands by the head of that institution, there is abundant evidence of its influence among our rural population. We can have no better criterion by which to judge of the increasing popularity of this institution than the roll of students—embracing, as I have before stated, pupils from all the Provinces—and the fact that applications for admission to the number of 200 were refused during last year, many being from Great Britain and the neighboring Provinces. In 1875 there were 32 students; in 1876, 40; in 1877, 87; in 1878, 146; and in 1879, 162. The experiment having been fairly tried, no person will now say that there was no necessity for the foundation of an Agricultural College, with an experimental farm, and able teachers to instruct its pupils—in the lecture room, in the laboratory, and in the field—in all the innumerable applications of science to agriculture and arts; to accustom them to the best methods of cultivation, and the skilful use of the best farming implements; to acquaint them with the best farm buildings and the different breeds of animals; to enjoin upon them system and habits of careful observation and reflection; in fine, to make them comprehend all the principles and the whole science of husbandry, with all its practical details, and the reason for them, and at the same time to give them a fondness for this noble occupation. The Agricultural College having now become one of the institutions of the country, and having so successfully, under so many adverse circumstances, largely fulfilled its mission, it only remains for the Legislature to extend its usefulness and, if need be, to establish other institutions of a similar character in different parts of the Province, so that every section of the Dominion may enjoy the benefits of a thorough agricultural training; although I am free to admit that I would prefer to see one college, with a high standard of agricultural training, fed from the Common and High Schools of the Province. This college, however, if it is to

retain its popularity, must be affiliated with the Toronto University, where degrees in agriculture can be conferred, and which will be a guarantee to the public that the holder of the same has reached the highest point in his profession, or the college itself must have the degree-conferring power given to it by the Legislature.

There is no reason whatever why farming in this country should not reach that state of perfection which is to be found in the Mother Country, if a proper system be adopted. That which is there considered most important to insure success, viz., under-draining, a judicious system of rotation of crops, and, above all, the destruction of noxious weeds, is largely neglected in this country.

It is a well-known fact that under-draining has done more than anything else to render agriculture in England superior to that of most countries. In a new country like ours it is important that a farmer should know what lands would be improved by draining, what lands would be profitably under-drained, and the best methods of under-draining. It may be conceded that where a soil is underlaid by a porous sub-soil nature has already accomplished the work of draining better than can be done by artificial means. But all lands of ordinary fertility naturally, which have a sub-soil retentive of water, will most certainly be benefited by draining. The sub-soil may be clay, hard pan, or anything else; it makes little difference what it is so long as it serves to keep the superfluous water from easily passing off. The result of such obstructions are readily recognized. It is said that one of the easiest modes of deciding what lands need draining is by digging a hole three feet in the soil, and if water remain in it at any time for three days continuously, it needs draining. It does not follow that all lands which would be improved by draining would yield a profit in consequence of its being done. This matter of profit depends upon various considerations. First, the character of the soil itself. There is some land which will not pay for fencing or for draining. The elements requisite for fertility may be wanting, or so deficient as to render the ground unproductive. Again, the location of the land may be such that although the improvement would quadruple its productiveness, if inaccessible, or if in a district where as good land as it would be after being thus improved could be bought for less than the cost of draining. It is important to know whether the improvement will pay a good profit, or how much the land would be worth after draining. And this is mainly dependent upon the character of the land and its situation, so that land which it pays to drain in some situations would not be profitable to drain in others. The benefits to be derived from under-draining are almost incalculable. It warms the soil by carrying off the stagnant water and permitting the warm rains of summer to go down, carrying warmth in their course; it enables the farmer to work the soil much earlier in the spring and much sooner after heavy rains; it enables roots to descend further and take better hold in the ground, and grow more vigorously and luxuriantly;

it prevents the freezing out of roots in the winter ; it serves as a valuable security against drought by enabling the roots to penetrate more deeply in the early spring, and thus obtain a supply of moisture during the dry season, and, in addition to all these advantages, it saves the necessity for open ditches, which have to be kept up at great expense, and which necessarily occupy much of the space on the farm which might be used for the purpose of cultivation.

Among the many practical questions presenting themselves to the farmer for solution, there is probably not one ordinarily passed over more lightly, and at the same time of more importance, than the question of what crops he shall plant and sow from time to time. Very often it is settled by present convenience, chance, or perhaps more often by the way the farmer has become accustomed to do it without any fixed rule. Experience has proved, what might be very readily supposed, that the ordinary farm crops require to be changed round, or not cultivate for any great length of time the same crop upon the same place. Of course to this there are exceptions. Grass, it is well known, may be raised for an indefinite period by top-dressing and occasionally turning over the sod, manuring, rolling, and seeding down. The demand which exists for a variety of products for home consumption, and the uncertainty which attends all crops, seem to make it imperative to raise a variety of crops. It necessarily follows that inquiry must be made whether or not the same crop can profitably be raised upon the same ground for successive years. A system of rotation leads to doing more upon the farm, as well as doing it better, to using more manure, as well as supplying the same to greater advantage. The particular succession which should constitute a rotation may be different in different localities, and depend somewhat upon the character of the farm to which it is applied, the locality, access to markets, the means of the farmer, and possibly his tastes and disposition. It is claimed, and fact and argument support the assumption, that upon every sufficiently cleared farm, some judicious system of a succession of crops, extending over not too long a series of years, ensuring a change before the soil shall have become exhausted under any one crop, must be adopted to realize the greatest return for expense incurred, and at the same time most surely and steadily improve the soil.

The greatest impediment to agricultural improvement and the profitable employment of farm capital is the growth of weeds. Some of the best grain-yielding soils in the country twenty years ago have, in consequence of the over-cropping and negligent culture, become so exhausted and filled with the seeds of noxious weeds as to be almost wholly incapable of yielding paying crops, and no inconsiderable portion of such lands may now be regarded as almost worthless. Every weed suffered to grow robs the crop of just so much food, lowers the stamina of the soil, and operates most seriously against any improved and profitable system of cultivation. Wherever the eye can reach in travelling through a very large section of Ontario, we find that abominable

enemy of the farmer, the Canada thistle, gradually destroying a very large number of the best farms. Notwithstanding the stringent enactments on the subject, there appears to be a reckless indifference to the discharge of duty among those upon whom the Legislature has conferred the power of destruction. It is time some steps were taken for the eradication of this abominable pest, which forms an insuperable barrier to agricultural progress, and consequently to the increase of wealth and national prosperity. Nothing short of the imposition of a fine upon every person who permits a thistle to ripen on his farm will ever cause its destruction.

It is, however, satisfactory to know that in some branches of agriculture Canada is not only keeping pace with, but is largely outstripping, our neighbors on the other side of the line. I refer particularly to the manufacture of cheese, the cultivation of fruit, and the breeding and exporting of cattle.

The Dairyman's Association, which, as I have already noted, has made such a creditable display, occupies a conspicuous place in the agricultural world, and has rapidly developed the art of cheese-making within the last few years. Instead of, as but a few years ago, being importers of dairy products, Ontario has become a large exporter, and to-day competes in the Old World successfully with the products of that country, and largely outstrips our American neighbors, when the relative populations are taken into account. As an evidence of the wonderful progress made in this industry within the last few years, I need only refer to the official record of the exports. In 1869, Ontario and Quebec exported 446,260 lbs., of the value of \$548,792; in 1876, 34,805,543 lbs., of the value of \$3,741,292; and in 1878, 46,389,763 lbs., of the value of \$4,000,000. It is satisfactory to know that the cheese produced by Canadian factories has already attained a good position in the British markets for flavor, and specially for its keeping qualities. The amount exported has steadily increased, and as a consequence this great source of wealth is assuming a greater importance every year. Our prospects in the future must mainly, as in the past, depend upon the quality of the article exported. Our character and reputation as a dairy country will depend on the skill and determination of our farmers to keep pace with the improvements which are being made in the breeding and management of stock suitable for dairy purposes, and in procuring from the farm an abundance of such kind of food as experience and science demonstrate to be the best suited for the purpose.

No department in all the routine of farm operations is more useful or interesting than fruit culture, and, strange as it may appear, many who have all the necessary advantages for producing fruit to a greater or less extent neglect it entirely, and seem content to do without it themselves, and deny their families the greatest luxury the farm can produce. Every one who cultivates a spot of land should raise some fruit and have it fresh from his own trees. Nothing is more grateful to the taste than good ripe fruit, and it is generally conceded that the free use of it is necessary to the preservation of health. Nothing is more ornamental round a dwelling, or will better adorn a

garden than fruit trees and vines, with their luxuriant foliage, their fragrant blossoms, and blushing fruits, and a good and well-conducted orchard may be made one of the most profitable of farm productions. One of the principal causes of discouragement in putting out new orchards has been brought about by the purchase of unserviceable, worthless trees from unprincipled agents instead of purchasing from reliable nurserymen, many of whom we have. Another cause of discouragement is improper location and treatment. Some have planted on flat and heavy soil without a suitable preparation by under-draining, and the trees have soon become stunted and worthless; others have planted in rich sandy soil, which has induced a rapid growth of wood, and consequently an early decay. Thanks to the energy displayed by the Fruit Growers' Association of Ontario, which has now become one of the settled institutions of the country, the cultivation of fruit has rapidly increased during the last few years, and now it has developed into one of the most important industries in a very large portion of Ontario.

The visit of the tenant farmers' delegates to this country during the past year cannot but have a very beneficial effect in connection with immigration. Selected as these gentlemen were by the different counties in England, as independent farmers, who thoroughly understood what was most needed by the agricultural community, their opinions will have a greater weight than those of paid agents from this country, who, in too many instances, have practised deceit upon the intending immigrant. Their report, which has been published, contains a very elaborate account of their visit to the several Provinces, and enables us to judge of the estimate formed by these gentlemen of Canada as a field for the immigrant. They almost unanimously agree that Ontario offers the greatest advantages to the agricultural laborer. The inquiry made by these gentlemen seems to have been of the most searching character. The system of responsible government and its effect upon the people; our educational system, which they describe as being of the most perfect description; the nature of the climate, which, so far as they were able to judge, was preferable to that of Great Britain; the soil and its capacity for production, are all discussed and commented upon favorably by them. I cannot do better than quote from the report of one of these delegates on his return to England. He says:—

"Such a vast tract of land as Canada must necessarily contain a great variety of soil. The surface soil varies from light sand to heavy loam, a medium fertile soil predominating, with generally a heavy clay subsoil. The great wealth of the Dominion of Canada undoubtedly is her soil. Although only a new country as compared with others, she is already well known as a great meat and corn-producing country. There is not, I believe, a more contented man in the world than the owner of this soil; he may not have command of as much capital as some English farmers, nor does he keep his land in such a high state of cultivation, yet the land he occupies is his own, his taxes are light, and, as a rule, he is a happy and independent man.

In a country like Canada it would be absurd to expect the farming to be carried on in as scientific a manner as in England; the land is so abundant, a greater breadth is cultivated, in proportion to the population, in what an English farmer would consider a rough sort of a way. It speaks well for the character of the soil and climate that under such adverse circumstances such excellent crops are obtained; in too many instances the land is merely scratched over. The general excellence of the soil, and other favorable conditions for feeding all kinds of stock, which prevail in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, together with the immense areas available, I think leave no room to doubt that Canada, in the near future, is capable of supplying us with more cattle and sheep than she is now doing. It is not more than five years since the Canadian farmer looked upon wheat as being the chief production; to-day the growing of beef for England is their first consideration, wheat only taking second place. As this implies a complete cropping of the farms, the Canadian farmer of the future will have to practise what will be to him a new system of farming."

We have again been favored with a visit from His Excellency the Governor-General, who, like many of his predecessors, has taken the greatest interest in these annual displays of the agricultural and mechanical industries of the country. The many valuable and practical suggestions which he made cannot but have a very beneficial effect. The absence of Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise, through that unfortunate accident which lately befell her, has caused the most profound feeling of regret among all who have visited our Exhibition, many of whom still hoped that she would have been enabled again to have honored us with her presence. I am sure I but speak the sentiments of every person in this country, when I say, that no person has ever visited the Dominion for whom the hearts of Canadians have beaten with greater feelings of admiration, love, and respect, all of whom devoutly pray that Her Royal Highness may speedily be restored to health, and grace with her presence His Excellency's household.

In conclusion, I have to thank the directors and officers of the Association for their uniform kindness and courtesy shown towards me on all occasions since I have been honored with the highest position in the gift of the agriculturists of Ontario.

On motion of Senator CHRISTIE, seconded by Mr. WM. SAUNDERS, a vote of thanks was unanimously accorded to the President for his address, after which Messrs. John Cavers, of Galt, and Henry Wade, of Port Hope, were unanimously chosen Auditors for the ensuing year.

Mr. THOMAS STOCK, of Wentworth, seconded by Mr. JOHN WHITE, of Halton, then moved the following resolution, which was carried unanimously: "That in the opinion of this meeting, the Provincial Exhibition—having been the means of developing agriculture in the Province—should not be confined to one locality, but should be held in convenient and suitable places in different parts of the Province."